

Injection Guide

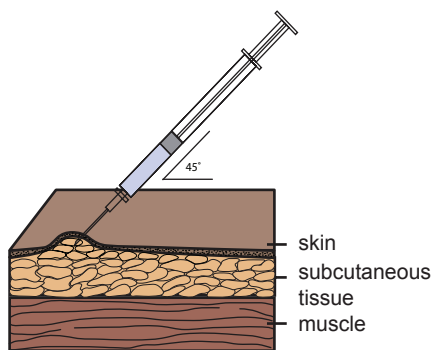
Subcutaneous (SUBQ)



WHAT IS A SUBCUTANEOUS INJECTION?

A subcutaneous injection delivers medication into the subcutaneous layer of tissue that is directly under the skin.

Medication delivered this way is more slowly absorbed into the bloodstream than medication that is directly injected into the muscle.



Needles for SubQ injections are usually 23-25 Gauge and 5/8" (inch) in length. Medication should never be drawn up through these needles. Use a separate drawing up needle.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR DISPOSING OF "SHARPS"

Improper disposal of syringes, needles, and other sharp objects can pose a health risk and damage the environment. **Sharps must be disposed of in a hard container. It is illegal to dispose of loose sharps in standard household waste.** Disposal sites will not accept loose needles or sharps in bags or glass containers.

To dispose of medical sharps, first place them in a sealable, puncture-resistant container:

- A home sharps container (purchased from pharmacies).
- A plastic container (a liquid-detergent bottle or milk jug) sealed with tape).
- A metal coffee can sealed with tape.

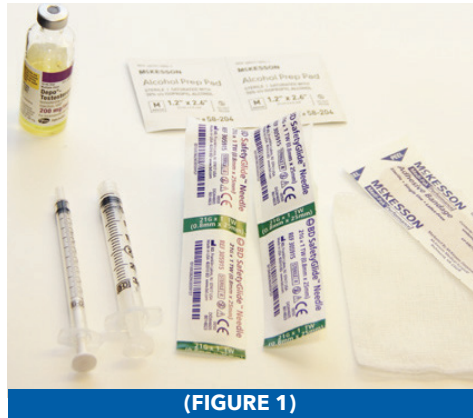
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SETTING UP FOR THE INJECTION

Find a comfortable, well-lit working place and inject at the same time of day, each time you do your injection.

Clean your work area & assemble supplies (FIGURE 1):

- Medication in a vial
- Disposable syringe and two needles: one to draw up medication and one injection needle.
- 2 Alcohol swabs (one for vial, one for skin)
- Puncture-proof needle/sharps disposal container. (Refer to page 2 for details.)
- Check the expiration date on the medication vial. *Do not use a medication with visible particles, medication that is discolored, or that is past the expiration date. (Medication is generally clear or light yellow when fresh and safe to use.)*
- Wash your hands. Hand washing is the most important thing you can do to prevent infection.



(FIGURE 1)

2

PREPARING THE INJECTION DOSE

If you are unsure what your dose is, STOP and call your doctor's office for help.

- Take the cap off the vial. Clean the rubber stopper with one alcohol swab. (FIGURE 2)
- Check the package containing the syringe. If the package has been opened or damaged, do not use the syringe. Connect a sterile needle to the syringe.
- Pull the 18 G needle cover straight off the needle. Then, pull back the plunger and draw air into the syringe. The amount of air drawn into the syringe should be the same amount (mL or cc) as the dose of medication that your doctor prescribed.
- **Do not let the needle touch any surfaces.**



(FIGURE 2)



(FIGURE 3)



(FIGURE 4)

- Hold the vial on your flat working surface and insert the needle straight down through the center of the rubber stopper into the bottle. (FIGURE 3)
- Push the plunger of the syringe down and push the air from the syringe into the vial. (FIGURE 4)
- Keeping the needle in the vial, turn the vial upside down.
- Position the needle so the liquid is covering the tip of the needle. You may need to pull the needle out slightly to make sure the tip is completely covered by the liquid.
- Keeping the vial upside down, slowly pull back on the plunger to fill the syringe with the medication to the number (mL or cc) that matches the dose your doctor ordered (FIGURE 5).



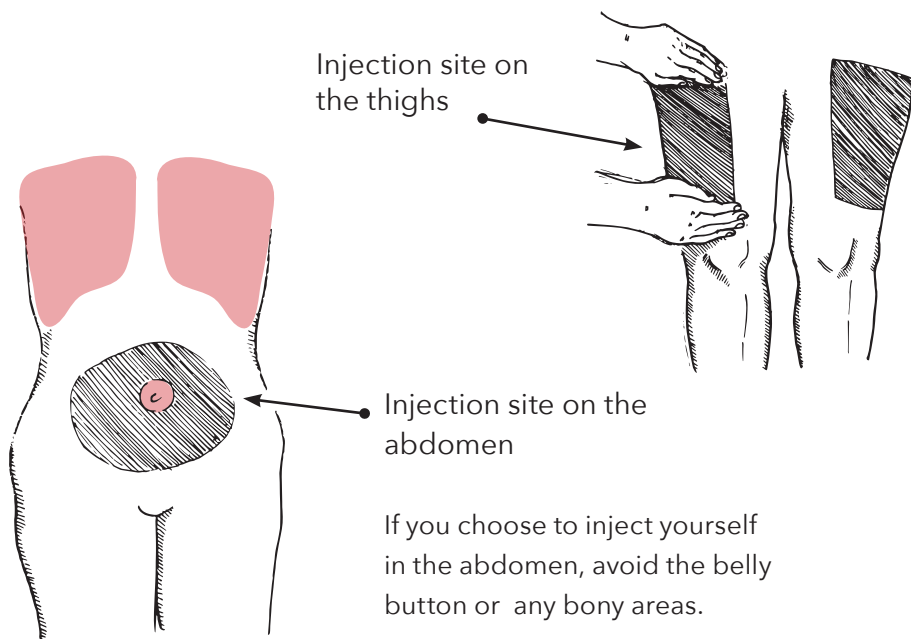
- Place a new needle securely on syringe to prepare for injection.

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SELECTING AND PREPARING THE INJECTION SITE

There are a few places you can give yourself a subcutaneous injection, including the fronts of your thighs or your abdomen.

Whichever site you choose to inject, you should be able to firmly grasp and pinch up approximately a 1-inch fold of skin.



If you choose to inject yourself in the abdomen, avoid the belly button or any bony areas.

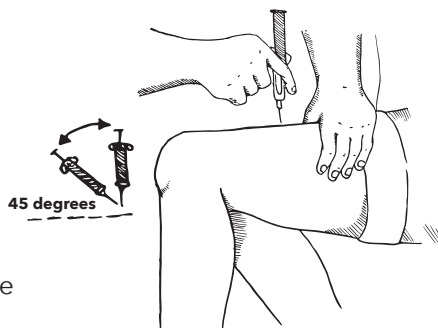
TIPS FOR REDUCING INJECTION PAIN

- » **Never reuse needles**
- » **Inject medicine that is at room temperature**
- » **Use separate drawing up (draws fluid out of bottles or ampoules) and injecting needles**
- » **Break through the skin quickly with the needle**
- » **Let the skin dry fully from the alcohol wipe before beginning the injection**
- » **Insert the needle straight into the skin, and pull it straight out again without changing direction or wiggling the syringe.**
- » **Keep the muscles in the injection area warm and relaxed.**

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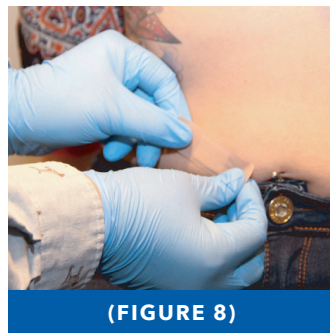
GIVE THE
INJECTION

- Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water and dry them.
- Clean the injection site skin with a new alcohol swab; let the skin air dry. Do not pat, rub, or blow on the skin to dry it.
- Hold the prepared syringe with the hand you will use to give the injection.
- With the other hand, pinch a fold of skin (*you will inject into the skin between your fingers*).
- With one quick and firm motion, insert the needle either directly into the skin fold at a 90 degree angle, or angle it slightly (45 degrees), if that is easier.



(FIGURE 7)

- After inserting the needle under the skin, keep the skin pinched up as you complete the injection by pushing firmly and slowly down completely on the plunger (FIGURE 7).
- Pull the syringe and needle out at the exact same angle you used to enter the skin. Dispose of the syringe and needle properly, using a sharps container.
- Gently press a sterile piece of gauze on the injection site. Hold pressure on the site until there is no bleeding. You can use an adhesive bandage if needed (FIGURE 8).



(FIGURE 8)

The information in this booklet has been adapted with permission from a handbook created by Fenway Health and Planned Parenthood of the Southern Finger Lakes.

Fenwayhealth.org

The instructions are based on information created and provided by the University of Michigan.



Planned Parenthood of
Metropolitan Washington, DC